ii) Sewage Treatment Plant (STP)

iii) Low Cost Sanitation (LCS)

iv) Crematoria (CRE)

v) River Front Development (RFD)

vi) Public Participation & Awareness (PP&A)

(c) Does Dot arise.

(d) The policy measures to improve the water quality of rivers have been laid down by a high level River Conservation Authority, namely, National River Conservation Authority, which are being followed both at Central Government and State Government levels. With the launching of the works of pollution abatement in Ganga in the year 1985 in the beginning, the NRCP now covers pollution abatement works in 32 rivers, spread over 158 towns and 19 States.

Poaching of tigers

2095. SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the major factors that made the poaching possible to tiger reserves during recent years;

(b) whether the connivance of some of the staff of Forest Department has been established;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the steps being taken to rehabilitate the tigers in these reserves;

(e) what new measures are being taken against poaching; and

(0 whether Government are considering to set up any Expert Committee to monitor the affairs of such reserves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) There are several causative factors, in addition to site specific problems, which foster

poaching of tigers, *viz.* ageing of frontline field staff due to ban on recruitment, shortage of vehicles, equipments, man-animal conflict, presence of biotic disturbance and heavily used infrastructure within protected areas and inadequate efforts towards eliciting the support of local people.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Question does not arise.

(d) The steps taken by the Government of India to protect tigers and other wildlife are at Statement (See below).

(e) Actions have already been agreed on urgent measures as per the recommendations of the National Board for Wildlife under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister for reviewing the management of tiger reserves in the country, which are at Statement [Refer *to the Statement appended to the answer to Unstarred Question No. 2086* ***(b)l,***

(f) An expert group already exists for independent monitoring of tiger reserves in country.

Statement

Steps taken by Government for protection and conservation of tigers and other wildlife

Steps taken by the Government for protection and conservation of tigers and other wildlife are as under:

(i) Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

(ii) Several rare and endangered species of wild animals have been included in the Schedules of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby giving it highest degree of protection.

(iii) The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended and made more stringent. The punishment in cases of offences has been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that has been used for committing any wildlife offence.

(iv) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehended and prosecute wildlife offenders.

(v) Government of India has set up Regional and Sub-regional Offices for wildlife preservation in major export and trade centres of the country to prevent smuggling of wild animals and their products.

(vi) Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz.* Project Tiger, Project Elephant and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

(vii) A National Wildlife Action Plan, 2002—16 was adopted by the Indian Board for Wildlife under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister in January, 2002. The plan outlines the strategy for conservation and protection of wildlife in the country.

(viii) Government of India is a signatory to many international conventions concerning biodiversity conservation and control of illegal trade in wild flora and fauna.

(ix) Bilateral agreements have been signed with Nepal and Republic of China for controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife.

(x) A Global Tiger Forum of tiger range countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

(xi) A proposal for creating a Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been made.

Complaints of torture and harassment of elephants

2096. SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been complaints of torture and harassment of elephants in the State of Tamil Nadu in the name of recreation, etc; and

(b) if so, the remedial action taken in this regard?